

Closing the Barn Doors After the Cows Have Left: MCRC's Solution to the Recruiter Shortfall

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"Closing the Barn Doors After the Cows Have Left: MCRC's
Solution to the Recruiter Shortfall"

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To

Major DJ Verda, CG 6

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The only regiment in the Corps that is in constant contact with its objective 30 [sic] days a month, without let up, is the recruiting service. It's the toughest job, at any grade, in the Marine Corps.

- General Carl E. Mundy, 30th
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Over the last several years recruiting young men and women into the armed forces has been an ever-increasing challenge to all services. Despite the challenges, Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) has consecutively made its recruiting mission for one hundred and twelve months.¹ This success over the last nine years has come at a price; our Marine recruiters on average are working over sixty hours a week, six days a week.² More recently, MCRC has been making its' recruiting mission at less than full strength. It is only a matter of time before MCRC and the Marine Corps fails to make mission unless changes occur. Marine Corps Recruiting Command's current process of assigning and managing Marines on recruiting duty is inefficient.

TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

Unlike regular Marine Corps units that are usually staffed between 85 to 95 percent of their Table of Organization (T/O), Marine Corps Recruiting Command strives for overstaff levels of 105 to 110 percent. T2P2 accounts for Marines in training, at the end of their tour, and before they become effective recruiters (figure 1).³ Overstaffing allows MCRC to maintain the recruiting forces and adjust the number of productive recruiters

¹ Major Mark Ramirez, USMC, Plans Officer, Future Operations Section, Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Interview by author, 16 December 2004.

² Marine Corps Research University, *Findings and Recommendations*. Vol. I of *Evaluate the Marine Corps' Recruiting Effort*. Pg 25 4.2.1.1, 9 April 2003.

³ MCRC T/O Increases. Information paper. N.p., 20 August 2004. Provided on 16 December 2004 by MCRC Future Operations Section, Maj Mark Ramirez.

to coincide with the annual accession mission or recruiting mission.

-Leave after checking into RS (average based on total force)	10 days average
-Proficiency and Review (PAR) training: (5) training (2) travel	7 days
-Training time at RSS prior to full production: (60-90 days)	75 days average
-Total Leave and Training (T2) Days	92 days (29% of the year given a 6 day work week)
Yearly recruiting force rotation (one third)	849
Relieved/year (3 year average)	126 (for cause/GOS)
Total Average Recruiter Turnover/year	975
975 x 29% = <u>283 recruiters on average that are in training status (not producing every day).</u>	

Figure 1: T2P2 Recruiters in a non-production status

Commandant General Chuck Krulak allowed a gentlemen's agreement in 1995 between MCRC and Manpower Management Enlisted Assignment section (MMEA) of Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA). The agreement allowed MCRC to overstaff and MMEA would not adhere to MCRC's current T/O. This agreement worked well until Commandant General James Jones released White Letter NO 08-02 in August 2002 outlining the Marines Corps overstaffs policies.⁴ In the letter it stated "overstaffs are not approved in excess of three years as those requirements are considered to be permanent and should be requested as a T/O Change Request (TOCR)."⁵ Upon receipt of the white letter, MCRC continued to operate "business as usual". It was not until MCRC was told by Total Force Structure Division (TFSD) of Marine Corps Combat

⁴ General James L. Jones, USMC, 32nd Commandant of the Marine Corps. White Letter 08-02 to All General Officers, All Commanding Officers, and All Officers in Charge. Subject: "Marine Corps Overstaff Policies." 8 August 2002.

⁵ General James L. Jones, CMC White Letter 08-02.

Development Command (MCCDC) that they were not in compliance with the letter and MCRC should validate their T/O and submit a TOCR to increase their T/O to do away with overstaffs.⁶ MCRC submitted a TOCR and subsequently approved for an increase of 425 recruiters phased in over the next three years.⁷ Instead of being proactive, MCRC was reactive. Subsequently Marines on recruiting duty will make up the manning level shortfall over the next three years.

ORDERS TO RECRUITING DUTY

After the Headquarters Recruiter Screening Team (HRST) scours the fleet for eligible Marines for special duty assignments, it is up to MMEA-85 special duty assignment section to issue orders. Each year, roughly one third of the recruiting force leaves recruiting duty. Before the change in the new T/O, MMEA aimed to send 1,200 Marines to recruiter school in hopes of graduating 936. With the increase of 425 Marines in the new T/O MMEA needs to send roughly 1,356 Marines to recruiter school to account for the additional Marines.⁸

Before Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, Marines receiving orders to recruiting duty reported to recruiter school as ordered. Over the last two years more and

⁶ MCRC T/O Increases. Information paper. N.p., 20 August 2004.

⁷ Captain Christopher P. McGuire. USMC. Special Duty Assignments, Manpower and Reserves Affairs. E-mail interview by author, 14 December 2004.

⁸ Captain Christopher P. McGuire. E-mail interview by author, 14 December 2004.

more Marines were not reporting for duty to recruiter school because their parent command would allow them to stay at their present unit. Additionally, the Marines' parent command failed to properly screen the Marine using the special duty assignment-screening checklist. This action reached its pinnacle during Basic Recruiter Course 1-05 (BRC 1-05). Two hundred and twelve Marines received orders to the course; fourteen failed to report and more than fifty percent improperly screened using the special duty assignment-screening checklist. This action or rather inaction was "the straw that broke the camel's back" and generated white letter number 10-04 from the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

In the White Letter General Michael Hagee states:

"Marine Corps Special Duty Assignments sustain the existence of our Corps and contribute to our prestige and warfighting capability... My guidance is simple—supporting the Global War on Terrorism is our priority, but we will not neglect special duty assignments."⁹

Before the White Letter, MCRC knew it was running into trouble. Marine Administrative Message (MARADMIN) 166/03 released 9 April 2003, stressed the importance of Marines reporting to recruiter school and even listed the names of all

⁹ General Michael W. Hagee, USMC, 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps. White Letter 10-04 to All General Officers, All Commanding Officers, and All Officers in Charge. Subject: "Special Duty Assignments Noncompliance and Command Responsibilities." 18 November 2004.

190 Marines scheduled to report to BRC 4-03.¹⁰ As it turns out, only 147 showed.¹¹ Figure two shows the graduating size for both fiscal years.¹²

FY-03				FY-04			
Class	Start	Drop	Graduated	Class	Start	Drop	Graduated
1-03	231	27	204	1-04	175	32	143
2-03	218	31	187	2-04	240	26	214
3-03	133	12	121	3-04	139	14	125
4-03	147	12	135	4-04	160	24	136
5-03	139	20	113	5-04	182	20	162
6-03	127	25	102	6-04	185	23	162
Total	995	127	868	Total	1081	139	942
* MCRC short 62 recruiters							

Fig 2: Recruiter School graduating size for Fiscal Years 03 & 04

It took MCRC 16 months before they released a message seeking voluntary extensions on recruiting duty. MARADMIN 395/04 released 14 September 2004, solicited request for voluntary extensions for Marines currently on recruiting duty. In the MARADMIN, MCRC needed 99 volunteers from Eastern Recruiting Region (ERR) and 87 from Western Recruiting Region (WRR). Additionally, MCRC admits, "The small class sizes at recruiters [sic] school in FY03 and FY04 have not kept pace with the number of Marines leaving recruiting duty."¹³

¹⁰ Marine Corps Administrative Message 166/03 (MARADMIN 166/03). Washington, D.C. DTG R 090731Z APR 03.

¹¹ Lieutenant Colonel Noel S. Wood, USMC. Director of Recruiters School. E-mail interview by author, 30 November 2004.

¹² Lieutenant Colonel Noel S. Wood, E-mail interview by author, 30 November 2004.

¹³ Marine Corps Administrative Message 394/04 (MARADMIN 394/04). Washington, D.C. DTG R 141700Z SEP 04.

RECRUITER ASSIGNMENT

According to the commanding general of MCRC policy letter 10-02 dated 5 August 2002, the G-1 section of MCRC is responsible for "initial assignments of recruiters school graduates... based on projected vacancies, as reported" in Marine Corps Recruiting Command Order (MCRO) 1020.1, Monthly Personnel Situation Report.¹⁴ The G-1 section consolidates the personnel report and subsequently fair shares the number of new recruiters based on the annual recruiting district's mission share.¹⁵ For example, if a district's mission is to achieve twenty percent of MCRC's recruiting mission, then twenty percent of the graduating recruiter class should go to that district. In addition, the G-1 section assigns personnel to keep all recruiting districts at the relative same manning level percentage (e.g. 105%).¹⁶

In theory, the procedures in place were to keep everyone on a level playing field as long as there was a standardized personnel situation report. MCRC had MCRCO 1020.1 Monthly Personnel Situation Report in place on paper, however, the G-1 section did not use it.¹⁷ The lack of the overall personnel situation by the G-1 section further compounded the recruiter

¹⁴ Marine Corps Recruiting Command Policy Letter 10-02. *Recruiter Assignment Policy*. 5 August 2002.

¹⁵ MCRC is composed of two regions ERR & WRR. Each region is divided into 3 recruiting districts and each recruiting district is further divided into recruiting stations. There are 48 recruiting stations in MCRC.

¹⁶ Marine Corps Recruiting Command Policy Letter 10-02.

¹⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Roger Mitchell, USMC. Operations Officer, 9th Marine Corps Recruiting District. Telephone interview by the author, 10 December 2004.

shortfall and led to manning level disparities between the recruiting districts. For example, the 9th Marine Corps Recruiting District (9MCD) was at 91 to 93 percent of its M/L during the latter part of fiscal year 04 and the beginning of fiscal year 05 (figure 3).¹⁸ During the month of December, the 9MCD had 14 vacant sectors and 16 Staff Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (SNCOIC) placed on-production that normally would be off-production.¹⁹

M/L of 474	FY 2004			FY 2005		
Out Month	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
On Board (O/B)	464	484	481	473	466	458
Total losses	-15	-3	-8	-7	-8	-10
Gains	35	0	0	0	0	0
O/B proj	484	481	473	466	458	448
minus NPR	-71	-71	-71	-71	-71	-71
actual #PR	378	375	402	395	387	390
Percent of M/L	91%	90%	97%	93%	91%	92%
* Numbers current as of 20 July 2004						

Fig 3: 9MCD personnel situation

In October 2004, MCRC published MCRCO 1020.1A dated 23 October 2004, which supersedes MCRCO 1020.1.²⁰ The new order's intent is "to maintain a streamlined method to track manpower information and to have a standardized format to accurately

¹⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Tracy R. Smith, USMC. Executive Officer, 9th Marine Corps Recruiting District. E-mail interview by author, 6 January 2005.

¹⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Tracy R. Smith E-mail interview by author, 17 December 2004. On-production means a recruiter has a specific monthly mission. Off-production means a recruiter does not have a specific monthly mission and is more in a supervisory or administrative role.

²⁰ Marine Corps Recruiting Command Order 1020.1A. *Monthly Personnel Situation Report*. 23 October 2004.

track the personnel status of the command on a month-to-month basis."²¹ The addition of a standardize personnel status report, 189 recruiters extending and, future increases in recruiter class size; MCRC G-1 should be able to accurately place recruiters where they are needed most.

RECRUITING TOUR

A recruiting tour typically last three years. Upon graduating from recruiter school, the new recruiter has the opportunity to take thirty plus days of leave before checking into the recruiting station (RS). After checking into the RS, the Marine's Date Current Tour Began (DCTB) starts and he starts receiving Special Duty Assignment pay (SDA); currently at \$475.00 a month.²² After that, the new recruiter will attend a weeklong training session called proficiency and review (PAR) conducted at the RS head quarters two months after graduating recruiter school. Thirty days later, upon completion of PAR training the recruiter is placed on production. Since recruiters are not placed on production mid-month, the thirty days turns into forty-five days. Once a recruiter is on production, he or she receives a monthly mission letter every month they are on production until the end of their thirty-six month tour.

²¹ Marine Corps Recruiting Command Order 1020.1A.

²² Marine Corps Recruiting Command. *Guidebook for RS Operations Volume III, 2004 Edition*. 21 Mar 2004.

Over the years, new recruiters have found a little loophole that shortens their actual recruiting tour and puts an extra \$950.00 in their pocket. Instructors inform Marines at recruiter school that upon graduation they should check-in at the RS and then go on leave.²³ Figure 4 depicts the best and worst case scenario by checking-in early.²⁴

Recruiter:	A (best case)	B (worst case)
BRC graduation:	16 December (goes on leave)	16 December
Report NLT Date:	7 February	7 February
Actual Report Date:	7 February	20 December (goes on leave)
Par Training:	7-11 February	7-11 February
DCTB:	7 February 2005	20 December 2004
SDA pay begins:	February	December
1 st Month on production:	April	April
# Months on production:	34	32
End of Tour Month:	February	December

Fig 4: Best and worst case of a recruiting tour

In this scenario, recruiter B leaves recruiting duty two months earlier than recruiter A and receives two months of SDA pay for doing absolutely nothing to help MCRC make it's recruiting mission. Over the past two years the average BRC graduating class was 150 recruiters. If all 150 recruiters followed recruiter B's path; MCRC would loose 300 months of production and would require an additional eight new recruiters to make up for the loss.

MCRC can make two adjustments in its recruiting tours that would increase overall productivity and decrease the number of additional recruiters required to fill unnecessary openings.

²³ Authors experience as a Recruiting Station Executive Officer for 37 months

²⁴ Scenario based on Authors experience as a Recruiting Station Executive Officer

First, recruiters should be placed on production the month after PAR training. This already occurs at the RS level and at the Recruiting Sub-Station (RSS), reinforcing the need to perform and help overall recruiting mission. Additionally the recruiter would receive their three, six, and nine month evaluations one month earlier. The second adjustment MCRC should not allow recruiters checking-in early (1 month) to go back on leave but place them right to work. Additionally, MCRC could have the recruiter's orders have a report no earlier date (the same month as PAR training). The second recommendation is in the best interest of the Marine Corps and only takes away benefits the Marine does not rate (2 months SDA pay & a shorter recruiting tour). If both adjustments were implemented MCRC would get between thirty-four and thirty-five months on production thus lowering the need for additional Marines from the fleet.

CONCLUSION

Given the present operational tempo of the Marine Corps, it is important to get the most out of all of our assets. The Marine Corps Recruiting Commands current operating practice has proven inefficient, as demonstrated by the recruiter shortfall. MCRC has begun to increase the number of recruiters on the streets and has taken steps to maintain a clear personnel picture to accurately place recruiters where they are needed most. With additional tweaks, such as placing recruiters on

production the month after PAR training and not allowing Marines to go back on leave immediately after checking-in, MCRC can lessen the need for additional Marines from the fleet and allow those Marines to continue serving of the frontlines in the war against terrorism.

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